

Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Statement for the Record
H.Con.Res. 248, Afghanistan War Powers Resolution
March 10, 2010

Ms. McCollum: Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.Con.Res. 248, a resolution that would require the President to precipitously withdraw American troops from Afghanistan by December 31, 2010. While I welcome today's robust debate on such a critical issue, there can be no doubt that abandoning Afghanistan and the region in this moment is against America's national interests.

I have supported America's engagement in Afghanistan since my vote in 2001 to authorize military action against those responsible for the terrorist attacks of September 11th. After years of inattentiveness by the Bush Administration, President Obama inherited a deteriorated security environment in Afghanistan. General Stanley McChrystal, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, completed a review in August 2009 that confirmed conditions to be rapidly declining, with the Taliban insurgency gaining ground and the allied NATO effort losing the support of the Afghan people.

Stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan directly impacts the safety of our citizens, and violent extremism poses a real and significant threat to global security. For this very reason, our efforts in Afghanistan have received overwhelming international support, with over 40 nations-NATO and non-NATO alike-contributing troops.

I support President Obama's strategy to provide our service men and women with the resources they need for success, to increase the commitment of our NATO allies through renewed engagement, and to build up the Afghan security forces so that our troops can come home. This work will not be quick, nor will it be easy. Still, one thing is clear: Afghanistan cannot be allowed to once again become a sanctuary for terror and extremism.